



“Polo S: Reorienting the Visual Culture of the Early Americas”

April 13 and 14, 2012

McNeil Center for Early American Studies, University of Pennsylvania

Figure: Joaquin Torres García, *América Invertida*, 1943, drawing, Museo Torres García, Montevideo, Uruguay

In 1936 and 1943, the Uruguayan artist Joaquin Torres García made two related drawings both of which depict the continent of South America from a southern perspective. With the cardinal direction of “Polo S” written across the top of the continent, the artist implored his modernist contemporaries in the Southern Cone to reconsider their perspective on the geographic location of the contemporary avant garde impulse. By invoking Torres García’s radical move, this international and interdisciplinary conference takes as its mission an exploration of the theoretical, regional, methodological, and subjective problems encountered by scholars who are currently working on the visual and material culture of the southern United States, the Caribbean, and South America. It is therefore an attempt to identify the shared challenges that researching and writing about objects produced in these locations prior to 1850 might present in a moment of de-centered intellectual discourse, not unlike the one that Torres García critiqued in the middle of the last century.

Organized by Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw, Associate Professor of American Art at the University of Pennsylvania, the invited speakers include:

Gauvin Bailey, Queens University
Amanda Bagneris, Tulane University
Mónica Domínguez Torres, University of Delaware
Maurie McInnis, University of Virginia
Marcus Wood, University of Sussex
Regina Root, College of William & Mary

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